

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Gloria Brown, and I live in Southington. I am a retired teacher. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about HB 6578.

Restoring the right to vote to people re-entering their communities on parole is extremely important to me.

I am here to speak about and for a person I will call Lenny. At age 14 he was arrested, tried as an adult, and sentenced to 40 years in prison. While in prison, Lenny did many things to make himself a better person, both physically and mentally. He continued his education and took many college courses online. He did meditation and yoga. He was an exemplary prisoner. My son (who is an attorney) was assigned to Lenny's case seven years ago. After serving 25 years of his 40-year sentence, Lenny was released two years ago. He got a job and has been promoted twice. He is engaged to be married; he and his fiancée recently bought a house. He has been successful in reintegrating into his community. He pays CT income tax and property taxes. But he cannot vote!

There are many Lennys in the state of Connecticut who have worked hard to reintegrate into their communities. They deserve to have their right to vote reinstated. Connecticut has the most stringent criminal disenfranchisement laws in the Northeast, and it is the only state in the region that still prohibits those on parole from casting a ballot. I urge you to support this legislation that will change that. Thank you.

Gloria Brown

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